

Lt. Governor John Garamendi Launches a National Health Care Reform Campaign to Keep Presidential Candidates In Check

LOS ANGELES – Bolstered by nurses, doctors, labor unions, small business owners and women’s groups, Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi today unveiled a \$40 million national health care reform campaign to hold health insurance companies accountable and provide quality, affordable health care for every American. Garamendi sent a strong message to the presidential candidates to make health care reform a priority.

“For economic reasons, for personal reasons, for national security reasons, the health care debate must take place in this presidential election,” Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi said. “The private health insurance system today is a monumental rip-off of the American public. It is based on moving money from public services at places like this Los Angeles County Hospital to Wall Street.”

The health care reform campaign starts today with \$1.5 million being spent on national television, print, and online advertising. During the next five months, the campaign plans to spend \$25 million in paid media in 45 states. Health Care for America Now will run the national campaign starting with a financial commitment of at least \$500,000 from each of the 13 steering committee members and a \$10 million grant from Atlantic Philanthropies in New York. Major labor unions will also be contributing to the campaign.

Garamendi, a leader of universal health care reform in 1976, during the Clinton Administration and as California’s Insurance Commissioner, said Los Angeles is a microcosm of the national health care crisis. Emergency rooms, he said, are closing their doors and there is a skyrocketing rate of uninsured children and workers. California is home to six million people without health insurance and residents are more likely to be denied coverage for pre-existing conditions and denied coverage at work than most states in the nation.

“All of us are one job, one illness away from not having health care insurance,” Garamendi said.

The following audio clip is Lt. Governor John Garamendi's speech on the health care crisis and how Presidential candidates need to be held accountable on the issue.

<http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/LTG%20Health%20Care%20PC%207-8-08.WMA>

Lt. Governor John Garamendi as a national leader on health care:

- Lt. Governor John Garamendi has been a national leader on universal healthcare reform since 1976 and during the Clinton administration.
- As a California legislator, Garamendi authored the Rural Health Act resulting in clinics and medical services throughout California. Garamendi also authored the Emergency Medical Systems legislation improving trauma and emergency services.
- As California's Insurance Commissioner, John Garamendi held health insurance companies accountable and issued a Priced-Out Report on health care saying, "We're in a death spiral. People are being priced out of the health care system."

The National Campaign

- Health Care for America Now is a coalition including ACORN, AFSCME, Americans United for Change, Campaign for America's Future, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Center for Community Change, MoveOn, National Education Association, National Women's Law Center, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, SEIU, United Food and Commercial Workers, and USAction.

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